

# Internet sex addiction



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The internet today offers a very large arrangement of options for its users. One of which is becoming increasingly popular. The internet is a source of sexual opportunity to many people. Online pornography and cyber-sexual community chat rooms are two of many. There are outrageous numbers of users using the internet to partake in sexual activity. There are arguments that online sex is an upcoming addiction just as hazardous as any substance addiction. But sex over the internet isn't what users are getting out of the situation. It's the effects and advantages of having sex via internet that keeps people doing it.

It may not even be an addiction related to sex only but something else also. These users may be addicted to what they get out of online sexual participation instead of the actual sexual actions themselves. Cyber-sexual chat rooms can offer much more than an orgasm. They can also suggest a sense of acceptance, confidence, anonymity, comfort, attention, and pleasure that some people can't seem to find themselves acquiring in the real world, offline. All of these things that the online chat rooms can offer are more psychological than anything. And each of them can become obsessive things that people seek out when they feel the lack there of.

This even happens in real life, during real intercourse between people. I am witness to it. A person can constantly desire to have sex with a person or persons solely on the fact that their partner is giving them passionate attention, even if they know it's not true on an emotional level. The same goes for online users, who seek out the same attention, except virtually. It's not the idea of coming into sexual contact with people over the internet that

is so appealing to people, instead it's what the sexual relationship ultimately offers to the person's mind.

It's needless to explain to positive and attractive effects comfort, attention, and acceptance can do for the human mind. As explained in Mark Griffith's article, *The Journal of Sex Research*, many claims about online sexual experiences come with no empirical data to prove the addiction to online sex. And there really is no way to ever prove it. How is one to justify that a user is addicted to sitting in front of a screen participating in sexual activity instead of the gratifying emotional and psychological benefits.

One makes more sense than the other. Many disorders already established are so similar to the possibility of the mental and emotional addiction that could be taking place within the cyber-sexual minds of internet users. The addiction is that of being obsessed with the alternate world online sexual sites and chat room sites can offer. This can be proven. The emotional and mental withdrawals from lacking the feelings that the internet can provide can be tested with the DSM-IV Substance Dependence Criteria. But of course, there is a counter-argument.

There have been reports that there is an addiction to "chat rooms" which are only available on the internet. Therefore the addiction is to internet sex. (Griffiths, 3) But until it is proven that those same people in the case studies wouldn't participate in the same chat-style environment offline, that argument is irrelevant. Realistically, if an offline opportunity was available, and offered the same results as the online chat rooms, the same people

would partake in that. Because addictions can be hard to diagnose, it's no surprise online sex addiction is so controversial.

But the human mind and emotion plays such a huge role in behavior it's only logical to argue that the true addiction lies within, instead of being the interest of the computer. When the internet offers such a broad variety of comforting feelings for some through virtual sexual contact, and it's so easily accessed, there's no reason those seeking the action wouldn't use the internet. But that doesn't mean it's their preference, it's just the simplest, and in some cases the only, tangible option.